

Police: People Ratio

One policeman for 1,429 souls in our country is a piece of news that tells but only half the truth. The UNB-circulated report, based on an article published by the Asiaweek magazine...

Add to this the poor equipment base of the police force. An off-the-cuff remark heard these days is that mastans outnumber policemen both in the head-count as well as in ammunition.

When cataloguing the equipment deficiencies of the police force we have a tendency to put sophisticated electronic gadgets on top of the list.

In the metropolises, the police with a few transports of their own often go for requisitioning private vehicles for what happens to be a purpose other than crime control as such.

Israel, Jordan Come Closer

Unpredictable things are happening in the Middle East. Old foes are becoming friends if not the vice versa. The process got going with Israel and the Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO)...

Jordan may not get back all the lands it lost to Israel in the 1948 war but the little compromise it had to make will not seriously affect its territorial integrity.

The breaking of new grounds for peace by Israel augurs well for not only that region but also, to a certain degree, the world at large.

NEW YORK — The two Bretton Woods institutions both turned 50 at the end of September, providing an occasion to reflect on what how far they have gone in accomplishing their tasks in global economic governance.

The sad truth is that the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund (IMF) are now but a shadow of their original vision.

In 1944, John Maynard Keynes proposed a Fund equal to one-half of world imports — so that it could exercise a major influence on global monetary system. In actual practice, IMF controls today liquidity only equal to two percent of world imports.

Keynes envisioned the IMF as a central world bank, issuing its own reserve currency (bancors). But the half-hearted IMF experiment to create its own Special Drawing Rights in the 1970s was doomed to fail when the United States refused to control its balance of payments deficits.

Not surprisingly, global financial markets today hold their collective breath awaiting words from Alan Greenspan (Chairman of the US Federal Reserve Board) — not IMF Managing Director Michael Camdessus.

The heart of the IMF-led

global monetary system was exchange rates. That system died in the early 1970s with the delinking of the US dollar from gold and the introduction of floating exchange rates.

All subsequent attempts to introduce a modicum of exchange rate stability have proved largely futile.

Keynes regarded balance of payments surpluses a vice and deficits a virtue, since deficits sustained global effective demand and generated more employment. This led him to advocate a penal interest rate of one per cent a month on outstanding trade surpluses.

The situation today is exactly the reverse: it is the deficit nations, particularly those without a reserve currency of their own, who carry a disproportionate share of the burden of adjustment.

The World Bank was supposed to stand between the global capital markets and the developing countries and to recycle market funds to them by using its own creditworthiness and by gradually building up the creditworthiness of developing nations.

The recent record of the Bank is proof of its growing marginalisation. Out of a global surplus of nearly US\$200 billion a year, the World Bank is

Inventing a New World Bank

In this exclusive column for Inter Press Service, Mahbub ul Haq, former senior official of the World Bank, outlines the dramatic departure of the two Bretton Woods institutions from the original vision for them set forth by John Maynard Keynes half a century ago.

recycling minus one to US\$2 billion in net terms towards the developing countries.

Private markets are recycling most of the global surplus — but about three-fourths of it towards ten rich countries.

The original Keynesian vision saw the World Bank as an institution for the expansion of global growth and employment levels rather than as an instrument of deflationary policies.

One of the most scathing criticisms of the Bank in developing countries these days is that, instead of offering IMF healthy competition, the Bank has chosen a path of intellectual subservience.

National budgets are being balanced by unbalancing the lives of people — through demand reduction rather than supply expansion, through cuts in social spending rather than military spending, and in food

recycles almost negligible net financial resources to developing countries is no less generous.

As global interdependence has increased, institutions of global governance have weakened, and we are back to ad hoc improvisations by rich nations, either unilaterally or through loose coordination by G-7.

The international monetary system had collapsed — so the response was to maintain stable currencies with generally accepted procedures for adjustment.

Unilateral national policies had created global chaos and the cure was new institutions of global monetary and economic governance, with clear objectives and with global policy engineered through broad international consensus.

We are so far from that original vision that today a basic question is whether we need the Bretton Woods institutions only to influence the policies of the developing countries, or to govern on a global scale.

What Became of Suzy Wong?

by Rehman Sobhan

WE have by now become sufficiently immunised to the double standards at play in the international arena where hypocrisy has become a way of diplomatic life particularly for the dominant Western powers.

Allowing for the hardening of our sensibilities over the application of double standards I still felt a sense of profound irritation when I read of complaints by the Western team managers about the remarkable success of the Chinese swimmers in the recently concluded World Swimming Championship in Rome.

In this winging by the West, there is a presumption of Asiatic inferiority where Chinese girls are presumed incapable of winning any sport on the basis of their natural skills. There is a built-in image of the Chinese as slant-eyed, slight, demure girls, who clad in tight cheong sams, are supposed to perform the traditional role of concubine. In the tradition of Suzy Wong, the

Hong Kong call girl immortalized by Hollywood. These stereo-type images of Chinese women, which the famous Arab Palestinian scholar, Edward Said, terms orientalism, are hard for Westerners to reconcile with the reality of Chinese women who have been working in the fields and factories of China, where they have been driving tractors, trucks and operating lathe machines.

There is furthermore a male-centric mind-set which makes it difficult to accept that Chinese women should

State investment in the development of sport in less developed economies is itself a response to the much better opportunities available to athletes in the West. In the United States, universities provide special scholarships to sportspersons of talent and serve as the nursery for world champions in athletics, swimming, basketball and American football.

perform the tasks or possess the physical capacities associated with males, without having from their birth been stuffed with performance enhancing drugs which have blown them up like battery hens. It is indeed wildly speculated that these drug-sodden Chinese sportswomen have been turned into men (presumably white men), associated with deep voices, body hair and heaven knows what other signs of masculinity. Some even suggest that the girls may actually be men masquerading as women.

It may be recollected that similar noises were made when the Chinese girls began, in the last few years, to dominate the middle and long distance races in women's athletics. Here too the record-breaking performance of these girls, known as Ma's army, from the name of their famous coach,

has been attributed to drugs. The use of drugs as a performance enhancer in most sports dependent on physical capacities is not new. We have read about the ban on Maradona from participating in the recent World Cup, the withdrawal of Ben Johnson's gold medal after he won the 100 meters at the Seoul Olympics.

effect on countries and enhances their visibility in the international arena. It is no accident that Imran Khan is now no less well known as a public figure in Pakistan than is Benazir Bhutto or Nawaz Sharif or that the victories of the Pakistan and Indian cricket and hockey team, or the Brazilian football team have always been a cause for much national pride.

This state investment in the development of sport in less developed economies is itself a response to the much better opportunities available to athletes in the West. In the United States, universities provide special scholarships to sportspersons of talent and serve as the nursery for world champions in athletics, swimming, basketball and American football, advertising sponsorships has made sport into a big business where top sportspersons can expect to earn millions of dollars from advertising endorsements.

The fact that the Chinese do spend an enormous amount of state funds in promoting sport which is participated in by a population of one billion people, that special efforts are made to spot talented athletes when they are young and that these talented youngsters are then exposed to a process of skill development and physical

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To the Editor...

Private sector banking

Sir, It has come to light in the news media that the government has accorded approval to the functioning of seven more banks in the private sector. This obviously goes to show that in view of increasing range of economic activities in the country, the government has found it necessary to encourage more banks to be floated.

the functioning of these two banks. It is known to all concerned that the government grants permission to the establishment of new banks, insurance companies and financial institutions after a substantial amount is kept as security deposit in the Bangladesh Bank by the sponsors of such organisations. Therefore, it seems to be easy for the government to compel the management of such organisations to account for their actions when they appropriate the funds and render the organisation into bankruptcy.

It is a matter of great misfortune that instead of taking stringent measures against the management of these banks and compelling them to restore functioning, the government has thought it wise to grant fresh permission for opening new banks.

The democratic government now in office, cannot shirk their duty and responsibility as they have preferred to remain as silent spectators, although the Ministry of Finance and the Bangladesh Bank have specific role to play and compel the management of these two banks so that they

may re-open without anymore delay. Abdur Rahman Motihsheel C/A, Dhaka.

Buying insult? Sir, Through your widely circulated daily, I would like to draw the attention of the authorities concerned to the following matter.

Bangladesh sent a large contingent of sportsmen and sports women to the Asian Games accompanied perhaps by a disproportionately large number of officials. It all looked very nice in the opening ceremony. But result-wise it is an insult heaped on the nation. It all boils down to spending millions to advertise the poor state of our sporting arena.

With international records available to everyone were we not aware of such results? Any excuse of sending sportsmen who are no where near the qualifying marks for international exposure does not hold water. Why can't we tell our sportsmen that when this poor country pays taxpayers' money it expects them to earn laurels and not insult? So, if they

cherish hopes of appearing in international meets they will have to tighten their belts and rise to the required level. The taxpayers do not want to see their hard-earned money squandered. Shaful Haider Chowdhury Chittagong University College

Inheritance of power Sir, In this region of our sub-continent we see how leadership and power have been inherited. Jauharial Nehru, Indira Ghandi, Bhutto, Bandarnai reared either their sons or daughters with good academic backgrounds in Europe or USA to receive the required enlightenment and education to become their country's future leaders.

As a result of this, we see their descendants coming into politics and proving their worth as able statesmen. They do not solely bank on their parent's glorious past, background, eminence etc. But their individual leadership quality, policy making ability and well grooming have definitely helped them to become a proper politician and ultimately successful states-

man/stateswoman. This is really a thought-provoking idea of this region's successful leaders in the context of inheritance of power for their country's future leadership. Motihs Samad Chowdhury Phulitola Tea Estate, Sylhet

check my emotion, but to drop them at their school buying them an icecream each. We would like to draw the kind attention of the honourable Minister for Communication to reintroduce the traffic restrictions, however set by the Ershad Government, to get rid of the trucks during the day time and allow them to ply only after 9 pm. This step was wisely taken for the very safety of the public, specially the school-going children.

We would appeal to the honourable minister to seriously look into the matter and take immediate action to reintroduce the traffic restriction, before many others get killed. To caution or set a speed limit, will be of no use to our truck drivers. The only remedy is to stop them plying during the day time and not before 9 pm. It is when the movement of others get thin. Stern measures should also be taken against reckless driving of buses. Moinuddin Dhaka

Killer trucks Sir, It seems, with the change of circumstances, the killer trucks are back in scene, with not care a hoot attitude. They are back in action creating a state of terror, specially among the tiny tots — school-going children. We recall the tragic death of the beautiful Rumana, a medical student, who was brutally crushed under the wheels of a truck last year, so was Elyas Kanchan's wife and the recent unfortunate seven and many others.

A few days back, two speeding trucks, as if competing in a grand prix, nearly bashed my car from behind and then almost ran over three tiny tots in a rickshaw, at Satmasjid Road. Had the truck hit us, we would have melted in bits. Hearing the horrified cry of the children, I just could not